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BOROUGH OF NELSON

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health
1941.

G. J. ROBERTS,
Medical Officer of Health.

BOROUGH OF NELSON.

HEALTH COMMITTEE.

ALDERMAN R. BLAND (Chairman).

COUNCILLOR H. HAYTHORNTHWAITE (Vice-Chairman).

THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR W. H. HINDLE).

ALDERMAN R. J. HUSBAND

„ A. SMITH

„ H. W. THROUP

COUNCILLOR J. W. BUTTERFIELD

„ A. DOLLIMORE

„ W. HOPKINSON

„ W. PENNINGTON

„ A. SHACKLETON

„ S. SHAW

„ D. J. SPEAK

„ H. H. URSELL

„ J. WIDDUP

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE.

ALDERMAN R. BLAND (Chairman).

THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR W. H. HINDLE).

ALDERMAN A. SMITH

„ H. W. THROUP

COUNCILLOR J. W. BUTTERFIELD

„ A. DOLLIMORE

„ H. HAYTHORNTHWAITE

„ W. HOPKINSON

„ S. SHAW

MRS. WESTWELL

MISS S. E. WHITTAKER

Medical Officer of Health R. G. MARKHAM, M.B., D.P.H.¹

G. J. ROBERTS, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H., D.P.A.²

Consultant for Puerperal Pyrexia and Consultant Obstetrician

J. H. WATSON, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.*

Veterinary Inspector J. BARKER, M.R.C.V.S.*

Chief Sanitary Inspector J. W. INGHAM, C.R.S.I.

Assistant Inspector S. GRINDROD, C.R.S.I.

Assistant Inspector and Chief Clerk S. HAYDOCK, C.R.S.I.

Clerk A. WILDMAN

Housing Records Supervisor N. GRIFFITHS³

Temporary Junior Clerk D. H. BELL

Health Visitors ... MISS B. E. EDMONDSON, MRS. B. WILKINSON,
AND MRS. A. H. FRANKLAND*

Matron, Maternity Home MISS I. BARKER

¹ Died 16th February, 1941. ² Commenced 5th August, 1941.

³ On active service. * Part time.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT,

NELSON,

AUGUST, 1942.

To the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1941 which is a record of the health and sanitary conditions in the borough and the work of the Health Department during the year.

As requested by the Ministry of Health the report has been considerably reduced in volume and is mainly confined to essential and urgent matters affecting the public health.

Not having taken up duty until August the Committee will realise my indebtedness to the members of the Health Department, and particularly to the Chief Sanitary Inspector, for their valuable work between that time and the date of my predecessor's death in February, a loyal co-operation which has continued. I also wish to acknowledge the help and consideration of the Chairman and members of the Health Committee and to refer to the kindness of the County Medical Officer and a number of officers of the Corporation in supplying certain statistics quoted in this report.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

G. J. ROBERTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY—1941.

Area in acres	3,466
Population—Census 1931	38,306
Registrar-General's estimate of civilian population—	
mid-year 1941	34,240
Number of inhabited houses—	
(a) Census 1931	11,128
(b) End of 1941 according to rate books	11,902
Rate	14s. 8d. in the £
Rateable value	£240,220
Sum represented by a penny rate	£928.26

The cost of the Health Services for the financial year 1941-42 was £8,969, which is equivalent to a rate of 9.67d. in the £.

VITAL STATISTICS.

LIVE BIRTHS.

	* For Birth Rate	* For Infant and Maternal Mortality
Total : Males	180	187
Females	181	186
	—	—
	361	373
Illegitimate : Males	9	9
Females	12	12
	—	—
	21	21

STILL BIRTHS.

Total : Males	15	16
Females	6	6
	—	—
	21	22
Illegitimate	Nil	Nil
	Rate per 1,000 births (live and still)—55.0	

DEATHS.

Males	233
Females	258
—	—
	491
	Death Rate per 1,000 of population—14.3.

INFANT MORTALITY.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.

Maternal deaths: Puerperal sepsis	1
Other puerperal causes	1
	—

2
Rate per 1,000 births (live and still) 5.06

*Since 1st October, 1939, the primary assignment of births for calculating the Birth Rate is to the area of the mother's usual residence, but for calculating Infant and Maternal Mortality Rates a secondary assignment of births is made to the area in which the mother is temporarily residing owing to the war. Civilian deaths of persons temporarily residing elsewhere on account of the war are assigned to the area of temporary residence. Moreover, owing to population movements and other factors, an attempt to compare the death rate in one locality with that in another has been found to be impracticable so that the issue of the Comparability Factor has been discontinued provisionally.

There were 361 births registered in Nelson, giving a Birth Rate of 10.5 per 1000 of the population (9.6 in 1940), which is lower than that of 14.2 (14.6 in 1940) for England and Wales.

There were 491 deaths of Nelson residents, giving a local Death Rate of 14.3 per 1000 (the Crude Death Rate in 1940 was 15.8), which is higher than the national rate of 12.9 (14.3 in 1940).

There were 19 deaths of infants under 1 year old, giving an Infant Mortality Rate of 51 per 1000 births (56 in 1940), as compared with the national rate of 59 (55 in 1940).

Comparative vital statistics are given in Appendix II.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

The causes of death are summarised in Appendix I. Of deaths from all causes 41.5% were in respect of persons of 70 years and over.

Cancer accounted for 58 deaths, i.e. 1.69 per 1000 of population, chest diseases (excluding tuberculosis) for 46 (1.34), all forms of tuberculosis for 21 (0.61), and violent causes for 21 (0.61). The number of deaths from respiratory diseases (excluding influenza and tuberculosis) was 9.37% of the total deaths at all ages, as compared with the national figure of 7.7% in 1939.

ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES.

Unemployment amongst the insurable population at the end of 1941 was probably near its minimum; there were successive reductions in unemployment as the year progressed. This improvement was referred to in the School Report, which showed that fewer families were eligible for gratuitous milk and meals for school children.

HOSPITAL PROVISION.

General hospital accommodation remains as previously reported.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS.

Records of readings taken at the Meteorological Station show that rain fell on 209 days, the total annual rainfall being 34.35 inches (38.68 inches in 1940), the wettest month being October and the driest June. Bright sunshine was recorded on 272 days, totalling 1103.7 hours—a daily average of 3.0 hours (3.5 hours in 1940). The mean temperature for the year was 46.4°.

WATER SUPPLY.

There was no change in the source of public supply but during the year negotiations to acquire the Coldwell Inn and Farm have been expedited so as to remove the last danger of pollution from such a source in the Coldwell catchment area.

[On the 1st August, 1942, the owners closed the premises as an inn and it is anticipated that the farming, already reduced by the owners, will cease altogether in the very near future.]

The average daily consumption of water was 1,919,959 gallons (which includes the compensation water discharge from the Coldwell Reservoir), averaging 39.1 gallons per head. There was no curtailment of the supply during 1941.

Routine tests are carried out by the Water Engineer to ascertain the purity of the water and samples are submitted at regular intervals for complete analysis and examination.

In 9 rows of houses old joint service pipes were replaced by new mains with separate service pipes to each house and since the inception of this scheme 421 rows of houses have been dealt with.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

There has been no change during the year.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The provisions of the Rivers Pollution Acts are administered by the Ribble Joint Committee.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Number of Privy Middens (in town)	1
Number of Fail Closets	46
Number of Fresh Water Closets	4820
Number of Waste Water Closets	7895
Number of Dry Ashpits, excluding middens	20
Number of Portable Receptacles for refuse	12320

Conversions :

Waste Water Closets to Fresh Water Closets 34

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Apart from the salvage of edible refuse for animal food the arrangements remain as hitherto.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS.

3234 premises have been visited at which 250 defects or nuisances were discovered, 241 of which were abated.

The number of notices served comprised : Informal—verbal 96, written 40; Statutory—1, no legal proceedings being taken.

Detailed records continue to be kept as previously.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

Inspections to factories with mechanical power (266) and without (54) total 177 and 79 respectively, 13 defects being found, 4 of which were notified by H.M. Factory Inspector.

HOUSING.

No new houses were erected during 1941.

Housing conditions generally are satisfactory, although some instances of overcrowding do exist, owing to various circumstances which do not easily lend themselves to abatement at present. A few houses in the locality, a number of which are empty, are in a dilapidated and insanitary condition and would, were it not for the suspension of demolition, be dealt with accordingly. With regard to defective occupied houses shortage of labour and building materials make it virtually impossible to proceed under the Housing Act, 1936, and even dealing piecemeal with the sanitary defects under the Public Health Act, 1936, presents difficulties.

Bug Eradication.—Disinfestation procedure is as described in previous reports, 22 houses (involving 59 rooms) having been disinfested

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are some 450 cows in the district distributed between 30 dairy farms (29 cowkeepers), which were subjected to 72 inspections. There are 9 milk purveyors but no milk shops.

One farm only in the borough produces designated milk, this milk (T.T.) being sold wholesale, and there are no pasteurising plants, although a large amount of T.T. milk and a limited quantity of pasteurised milk is retailed locally.

6 samples of milk have been submitted for biological test in the local laboratory, none of which contained tubercle bacilli. 12 samples (9 satisfactory and 3 unsatisfactory according to the Accredited Milk standard) were submitted for bacteriological examination and of the 12 samples submitted for sediment test, all were satisfactory. Further, these 12 samples were tested in the department for milk fat, solids-not-fat, the reduction of methylene blue and the presence of *B. coli*; one sample being found to be deficient in fat and 3 showing *B. coli* present in 0.01 c.c., the rest being satisfactory.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

No slaughtering has been carried out in the town since controlled slaughtering came into operation. Routine inspection of shops, stalls and vehicles where meat or prepared food is sold has continued.

Food has been submitted, found unfit for human consumption and certified, as follows:—320½ lbs. beef, 9½ lbs. bacon, 39¾ lbs. cod, 34½ lbs. halibut, 5 lbs. haddock, 700 lbs. onions, 2 tins (6 lbs. each) corned beef, 1 tin (30 lbs.) frozen eggs and 349 tins evaporated milk.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

The summary below refers to notifiable infectious diseases:—

Disease.	Cases notified in 1941.	Cases removed to hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	— (—)	—	—
Scarlet fever	105 (12)	52	—
Diphtheria	19 (3)	16	2
Enteric fever	— (1)	—	—
Puerperal pyrexia	1 (2)	1	1
Erysipelas	7 (23)	—	—
Ophthalmia neonatorum ...	1 (4)	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis	1 (2)	1	—
Acute polio-encephalitis ...	— (—)	—	—
Encephalitis lethargica	2 (—)	—	—
Cerebro-spinal fever	8 (3)	8	2
Pneumonia	10 (27)	—	12
Malaria	— (—)	—	—
Dysentery	— (—)	—	—
Measles	347 (39)	3	—
Whooping cough	92 (51)	1	3
Pulmonary tuberculosis ...	26 (26)	18	18
Non-pulmonary tuberculosis	12 (16)	3	3
Totals	631 (209)	103	41

(In brackets are the corresponding figures for 1940.)

Comparative figures are given in Appendix II.

This year has seen a considerable increase in the incidence of SCARLET FEVER, the 105 cases (of whom 49.5% were removed to hospital) being spread over the year without assuming epidemic proportions. 78 cases (74.3%) were in children between 5 and 15 years of age and there were 2 instances of return cases.

There was an increase of DIPHTHERIA (19 cases) as compared with the experience in 1939 and 1940 when the figures were 4 and 3 respectively. There were two deaths this year, one a man of 64 and the other a boy of 12. Towards the end of October the scheme for PREVENTIVE INOCULATION against diphtheria was put into operation. Before this date practically no diphtheria immunisation had been undertaken locally. At the end of the year 1,400 school children and 271 pre-school children had been immunised, figures which are distinctly encouraging in view of the former keen anti-vaccinist feeling in the town. This important step in the preservation of public health by the prevention of preventable disease constitutes one of the most important (if somewhat belated) innovations in the local health services. Diphtheria antitoxin continues to be kept at the Police Station and is available to local practitioners at all times.

There were eight cases (with 2 deaths) of CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER during the year, as compared with 3 cases in 1940, prior to which the last case notified was in 1936. In the case of 7 of the patients investigation failed to reveal any connection with another case, the remaining one being a secondary case.

A MEASLES epidemic (347 cases), which had commenced towards the end of 1940, continued during the first half of the year, ending abruptly with the school summer holidays. The disease attacked children in the various age groups as follows—under two years—25 (7.2%), two to five years—146 (42.1%), five to ten years—57 (16.4%); there were no deaths from this disease.

An outbreak of WHOOPING COUGH, which had commenced in the last quarter of 1940, continued at a relatively steady level until it subsided early in July, as in the case of measles. There were 92 cases—14 (15.2%) in the under two age group, 41 (44.6%) in children aged two to five, and 29 (31.5%) in children aged five to ten; three cases terminated fatally.

TUBERCULOSIS.—Dr. Scott G. Adam, the Consultant Tuberculosis Officer for this area, has kindly supplied the following particulars relating to Nelson patients:—

Notifications of new cases number 14 pulmonary and 12 non-pulmonary (totalling 26), and of 168 new patients—147 of whom were examined at the Dispensary and 21 at their homes—30 were found to be suffering from some form of tuberculosis, the remainder being discharged after observation as non-tuberculous. There were 297 re-examinations of “old” cases

and with regard to treatment 24 "early" cases were admitted to sanatorium, 23 advanced cases to hospital and 21 cases of surgical tuberculosis to general or special hospitals; X-ray examinations totalled 217. The Tuberculosis Health Visitor made 26 primary and 784 subsequent visits to patients. During the year 3 pulmonary and 6 non-pulmonary cases were written off as "recovered".

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY.—The work done included the following examinations:—diphtheria swabs 119, urine 162, sputum 25, pus for gonococci 15, pus for other organisms 9, ear discharge 6, eye discharge for ophthalmia 6, eye swabs for other organisms 10, blood films 9, pathological specimens 39, milk deposits 7, hair for ringworm 5, animal tissues 8, animal smears 3, tapeworms 2, water 2, faeces 3, other examinations 4. Two blood specimens for Wassermann reaction were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory, Burnley, and four for Widal reaction to the Clinical Research Association.

DISINFECTION.—371 rooms were fumigated for all purposes, 154 being disinfected by formalin vapour and spray following infectious disease; 735 articles of clothing, 4448 articles of bedding and 277 miscellaneous articles were treated in the steam disinfecter.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE.

The general arrangements for carrying out this work remain as outlined in previous reports.

MATERNAL WELFARE.—The Lancashire County Council is the Local Supervising Authority which employs two district midwives. There are five midwives (including the Matron) at the Municipal Maternity Home.

ANTE-NATAL CLINICS.—234 expectant mothers made 1544 attendances at the Ante-natal Clinic, which is conducted by the Matron of the Maternity Home, referring abnormal cases to the Obstetric Consultant who attends at specified times. Expectant mothers employed in industry during the day can be seen by the Matron at an evening session held at the Maternity Home.

MUNICIPAL MATERNITY HOME.—223 maternity cases were admitted to the Home (10 beds) during the year, the average duration of stay per case being 14 days. 167 were delivered by midwives and 54 by doctors, medical assistance being sought by a midwife in 38 cases. There were no puerperal deaths in the Home. There were 207 live births, 14 still births and 3 deaths of infants within 10 days of birth. The causes of still birth were maceration 4, prematurity 2, difficult birth 2, anencephaly, spina bifida (with hydrocephaly), malformation, eclampsia, albuminuria, and ante-partum haemorrhage, and

the causes of death were prematurity 2 and congenital heart disease. In one instance the ante-natal mother was transferred to hospital for Caesarean operation.

MATERNAL MORTALITY.—There was one maternal death from puerperal sepsis and one from other puerperal causes thus yielding a Maternal Mortality Rate of 5.06 per 1000 births (live and still). Although this figure compares unfavourably with the national rate of 2.23 it will be appreciated that owing to the small numbers involved no strict statistical comparison is possible.

PUERPERAL PYREXIA.—One case of puerperal pyrexia has been notified.

HOME HELPS.—A scheme for the provision of home helps exists but is largely ineffective owing to the small demand and to the difficulty in enrolling satisfactory individuals; 6 home helps were provided.

DENTAL TREATMENT.—There are arrangements for the dental treatment of expectant and nursing mothers by local dentists although only one mother availed herself of this scheme; presumably such treatment is secured either privately or as an additional benefit under National Health Insurance. Dental treatment on medical grounds is provided for pre-school children by the School Dentist.

INFANT WELFARE.—352 live births and 20 still births were notified, 367 by midwives and 5 by doctors and parents. There were 361 registered live births (of whom 21 were illegitimate) and 21 registered still births all of whom were legitimate. The BIRTH RATE was 10.5 per 1000 of the population and the INFANT MORTALITY RATE 51 per 1000 live births—as calculated from the 19 infant deaths during the year. Of these deaths 14 were in infants under one month old, thus giving a NEONATAL MORTALITY RATE of 37 per 1000 births; the causes of neonatal death were prematurity 11, congenital malformation and infant diseases 3, chest diseases 3, infections 1 and other 1.

Regarding YOUNG CHILD MORTALITY there were 7 deaths of children from one to five years old, the causes being whooping cough 2, accident 2, acute miliary tuberculosis, posterior basic meningitis and cerebral abscess.

Under the Public Health (Ophthalmia Neonatorum) Regulations, 1926-1937, 1 case of ophthalmia neonatorum was notified, being treated at home; the vision was unimpaired.

WELFARE CENTRE.—At the weekly Infant Clinic sessions 292 children under one year made 1720 attendances and 396 children aged one to five made 828 attendances, an average per session of 39.1 infants and 18.8 young children.

29 children under five years of age were referred to the Orthopaedic Clinic and 6 to the Ophthalmic Clinic.

On behalf of the Ministry of Food cod liver oil and fruit juice have been distributed daily from the Clinic premises, commencing 8th December, 1941, and proprietary brands of dried milk (3865 lbs.) and cod liver oil emulsion continued to be sold at cost price at the Health Department. No National Dried Milk has been issued locally owing to the absence of any demand, but fortunately, as previously mentioned, there is a good supply of T.T. milk available in the district and, as it has been the policy of the Education Committee to supply only such milk to schools, the liquid milk consumed by expectant and nursing mothers and pre-school children (not on dried milk) through the National Milk Scheme is very largely tuberculin tested, the difference in price being met by the consumer. In view of this prejudice against National Dried Milk the Health Visitors are of course instructed to emphasize the importance of boiling all non-designated milk when fed to infants and young children.

CHILD LIFE PROTECTION.—There were 6 nurse children on the Register at the end of the year.

HOME VISITING.—The two whole-time and one half-time Health Visitors made 146 first and 155 subsequent visits to expectant mothers, 355 first and 2791 subsequent visits to children under one year of age and 3426 visits to children from one to five years old.

APPENDIX I.

Causes of Death with Corresponding Rates.

Cause of Death	Male	Female	Total	Death Rate
	233	258	491	14.34
All causes.				
1. Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers...	—	—	—	0.00
2. Cerebro-spinal fever	2	—	2	0.06
3. Scarlet fever	—	—	—	0.00
4. Whooping cough	2	1	3	0.09
5. Diphtheria	2	—	2	0.06
6. Tuberculosis of respiratory system	9	9	18	0.53
7. Other forms of tuberculosis	3	—	3	0.09
8. Syphilitic disease	1	1	2	0.06
9. Influenza	1	2	3	0.09
10. Measles	—	—	—	0.00
11. Acute poliomyelitis and polioencephalitis	—	—	—	0.00
12. Acute infectious encephalitis	—	—	—	0.00
13M. Cancer of buccal cavity and oesophagus (males only)	7	—	7	0.20
13F. Cancer of uterus	—	5	5	0.15
14. Cancer of stomach and duodenum	3	5	8	0.23
15. Cancer of breast	—	7	7	0.20
16. Cancer of all other sites	15	16	31	0.91
17. Diabetes	4	7	11	0.32
18. Intra-cranial vascular lesions	20	32	52	1.52
19. Heart disease	66	62	128	3.74
20. Other diseases of the circulatory system	15	7	22	0.64
21. Bronchitis	13	12	25	0.73
22. Pneumonia	3	9	12	0.35
23. Other respiratory diseases	6	3	9	0.26
24. Ulcer of the stomach or duodenum	3	1	4	0.12
25. Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)...	—	—	—	0.00
26. Appendicitis	—	2	2	0.06
27. Other digestive diseases	5	11	16	0.47
28. Nephritis	5	16	21	0.61
29. Puerperal and post-abortive sepsis	—	1	1	0.03
30. Other maternal causes	—	1	1	0.03
31. Premature birth	5	6	11	0.32
32. Congenital malformations, birth injury, infantile disease	2	1	3	0.09
33. Suicide	2	—	2	0.06
34. Road traffic accidents	4	—	4	0.12
35. Other violent causes	9	6	15	0.44
36. All other causes	26	35	61	1.78

APPENDIX II.

Birth Rates, Civilian Death Rates, Analysis of Mortality, Maternal Mortality, and Case Rates for certain infectious diseases in the year 1941.

	England and Wales.	126 County Boroughs and Great Towns including London.	148 Smaller Towns. Resident Population of 15,000 to 50,000 at 1931 Census.	London Adm. County.	Nelson.
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RATES PER 1000 CIVILIAN POPULATION

Live births	14.2	14.7	16.4	8.9	10.5
Still births	0.51	0.58	0.60	0.33	0.60
Deaths :					
All causes	12.9	14.9	13.0	16.3	14.3
Typhoid & paratyphoid fever	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00
Scarlet fever	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
Whooping cough	0.06	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.09
Diphtheria	0.07	0.08	0.06	0.03	0.06
Influenza	0.19	0.17	0.20	0.15	0.09
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.00

RATES PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS

Deaths under one year of age	59	71	56	68	51
Deaths from diarrhoea and enteritis, under 2 years of age	5.1	7.5	4.6	6.8	0.00

RATES PER 1000 CIVILIAN POPULATION.

Notifications :					
Typhoid fever	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.00
Paratyphoid fever	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.05	0.00
Cerebro-spinal fever	0.25	0.31	0.20	0.30	0.23
Scarlet fever	1.47	1.49	1.51	1.01	3.07
Whooping cough	4.39	4.37	4.50	3.50	2.69
Diphtheria	1.25	1.53	1.19	0.93	0.56
Erysipelas	0.30	0.36	0.27	0.50	0.20
Smallpox	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	10.33	8.27	10.47	4.77	10.13
Pneumonia	1.25	1.53	1.04	1.07	0.29

APPENDIX II. (Contd.)

	England and Wales	126 County Boroughs and Great Towns including London.	148 Smaller Towns Resident Population 25,000 to 50,000 at 1931 Census	London Adm. County.	Nelson.
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RATES PER 1000 TOTAL BIRTHS (LIVE AND STILL).

Maternal Mortality :					
Puerperal infection	0.48				2.53
Others	1.75	—		Not available	2.53
Total	2.23)			5.06
Notifications :					
Puerperal fever.....					
Puerperal pyrexia	11.91	15.64	9.43	{ 2.29 19.33*	2.54

* Including puerperal fever.

